DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 452 971 PS 029 454

TITLE Curriculum Handbook for Parents, 2000-2001: Catholic School Version, Grade 8.
INSTITUTION Alberta Dept. of Education, Edmonton.
ISSN ISSN-1483-1716
PUB DATE 2000-00-00
NOTE 45p.; The Alberta Learning "Curriculum Handbook for Parents" series is published periodically in new editions, one for each grade/academic level, usually with only slight changes from the prior edition. There are two series, one set for public schools and one set for Catholic schools. For the 1998 Catholic school series, see ED 421 293-404. For the 2000-2001 Catholic school series, see PS 029 446-456.
AVAILABLE FROM Learning Resources Distributing Centre, 12360-142 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5L 4X9. Tel: 780-427- 5775; Fax: 780-422-9750; Web site: http://www.lrdc.edc.gov.ab.ca. Handbook may also be found on Web site: http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Art Education; Career Exploration; *Catholic Schools; *Educational Objectives; Fine Arts; Foreign Countries; French; *Grade 8; Health Education; *Junior High School Students; Junior High Schools; Language Arts; Mathematics Curriculum; Outcomes of Education; Parent Materials; Parent Participation; Physical Education; Religious Education; Science Curriculum; Second Language Instruction; Secondary Education; *Secondary School Curriculum; Social Studies; Technology Education
IDENTIFIERS *Alberta

ABSTRACT

This handbook provides parents with information about the Grade 8 curriculum in Catholic schools in Alberta, Canada. Based on the Alberta Learning "Program of Studies: Junior High Schools," the handbook describes the knowledge, skills, and attitudes Catholic school students in Alberta are expected to demonstrate upon completion of the Grade 8 curriculum. Following introductory material, sections include: (1) "What Is Curriculum?"; (2) "Religious Education"; (3) "English Language Arts"; (4) "Mathematics"; (5) "Science"; (6) "Social Studies"; (7) "Physical Education"; (8) "Health and Personal Life Skills"; (9) "Information and Communication Technology"; and (10) "Optional Courses" in Career and Technology Studies, Fine and Performing Arts, and Language Programs and Courses Other than English. Each section includes samples of what students are expected to learn in each subject. The handbook concludes with a one-page questionnaire requesting feedback on the handbook. (KB)

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Curriculum Handbook *for* **Parents**

2000–2001

Catholic School Version

GRADE 8 EIGHT

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ISSN 1483–1716

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Curriculum Handbook *for* **Parents**

2000–2001

Catholic School Version

GRADE 8

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Message from the
Minister of Learning

Alberta offers more schooling options than ever before. The opportunity for choice reflects our commitment to quality education—the solid foundation every child needs to learn, grow and succeed.

While students are at the centre of the education system, parents are vital partners. Your involvement in your child's education is critical to his or her success. To help your child succeed—you need to know what is being taught. This handbook is developed to provide you with that information. As well, I encourage you to continue working closely with your child's teacher who can provide you with invaluable information and guidance.

The *Curriculum Handbook for Parents* series is your guide to each stage of learning. It is an outline of what we expect our students to know at each grade level of their education. When you know what is expected at school, you can provide the home support your children need. By reading about what they are learning at school and discussing it at home, you are sending a very important message to your child—that you value education.

Alberta Learning revises curriculum in the core subject areas every eight to ten years. This ensures that course content remains current and relevant, and meets the needs of students preparing for their futures.

Education is a fundamental part of the Alberta Advantage, and government's goal is for Alberta to have the best-educated students in the world. We can accomplish this only one way—by working *together*. We are all partners in education—parents, teachers, trustees, administrators, community members—and we must work to address issues and help ensure Alberta students acquire the knowledge and skills they need for a successful future.

Our children are our future, and our most important investment.

Dr. Lyle Oberg
M.L.A. Strathmore-Brooks
Minister of Learning

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Dear Parents and Guardians:

On behalf of the Catholic Bishops of Alberta, I welcome this opportunity to affirm you in your role as parents in the education of your children and wish to express my appreciation to the Government of Alberta and Alberta Learning for this 'Curriculum Handbook for Parents'.

The Church has always recognized with confidence that you, parents, are the first and primary educators of your children, especially with regards to education in the faith. This is a noble, yet, challenging calling that is rightfully yours. Today, therefore, because of the many diverse pressures and influences on our children, your role is vital in working with our schools to continue to provide the best possible education for our children. To those of you who have entrusted your children to a Catholic school be assured that it is with great respect for these facts that we support you in your role. I encourage you to work closely with our Catholic schools by joining your local school councils or parent groups. Be a strong voice for the Catholic identity of schools. In this regard, you will share in a concrete and invaluable way in the central mission of the Church which is to proclaim Jesus and his Gospel in the world today and, in so doing, hand on our faith to our children.

I commend Alberta Learning for providing parents with this practical Curriculum Handbook. It is a clear presentation of what parents can expect of our Alberta schools, Public and Catholic, and by its very existence also acknowledges how important you are as parents in your children's education. In it, you will find a comprehensive presentation of the content and expectations of the Religious Education Program written and approved by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. It reflects the essential character of Catholic schools as communities of learning where as an old friend wrote, "... God, God's truth and God's life are integrated into the entire syllabus, curriculum and life of the school."

+Thomas Collins

Thomas Collins
Archbishop of Edmonton
President, Alberta Conference of Catholic Bishops

8421 - 101 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T6A 0L1 • Tel.: (780) 469-1010 • Fax: (780) 465-3003

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Introduction to the Grade 8 Handbook

This handbook provides parents with information about the Grade 8 curriculum—the knowledge, skills and attitudes students in Alberta are expected to demonstrate when they have completed the Grade 8 curriculum. It is based on the Alberta Learning *Program of Studies: Junior High Schools.* The handbook includes samples of what students are expected to learn in each subject. The complete curriculum for Grade 8 is available in all Alberta junior high schools.

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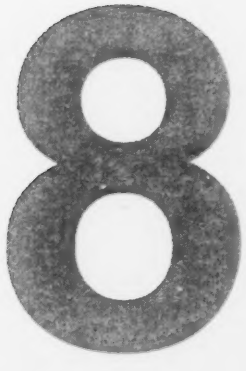
Introduction

TO THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Alberta Learning specifies what all students are expected to learn and be able to do. The curriculum is organized into separate subjects or course areas and is designed to enable teachers to make connections across subjects, and to develop programming that accommodates a range of student needs. We expect that teaching methods and schedules will vary from school to school and from class to class to meet the diverse learning needs of students.



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What Is Curriculum?

Curriculum describes what students are expected to learn. In Alberta, curriculum is developed by Alberta Learning and is described in documents called programs of study for elementary, junior high and senior high schools.

The curriculum specifies what all students in the province are expected to learn in each subject area at each grade level. It is developed by Alberta Learning in consultation with teachers, administrators, parents, representatives from post-secondary institutions, and professional and community groups.

Within the context of Catholic schools, the curriculum in all of its aspects—content, the teaching process, and the total school environment—reflect the values of faith, hope, charity, forgiveness and justice as found in the gospels and the message of Jesus Christ as understood by the Catholic Church.

Teachers are responsible for using the curriculum to plan their teaching activities and set appropriate levels of challenge according to students' learning needs and abilities. Teachers regularly assess student progress and report to parents, students and school administrators.

A document entitled *The Parent Advantage* provides tips and strategies to assist parents in helping their children at home with their school work. This resource is available for purchase from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre.

In Catholic schools, there are many opportunities for integrating gospel values and nurturing the presence of God in our midst within the curriculum. Teachers will determine where religious education and church teaching can be integrated with other subjects.

Achievement Tests

As well as being assessed by their teachers, students write provincial achievement tests in grades 3, 6 and 9. Grade 3 students write achievement tests in language arts and mathematics. Grades 6 and 9 students write achievement tests in language arts, social studies, mathematics and science. The results of these achievement tests are provided to school boards and schools. Parents may ask for their child's test results at their local school.

Information about provincial achievement testing in grades 3, 6 and 9 is provided in an Alberta Learning publication called *Parent Guide to Provincial Achievement Testing.* Individual guides for Grade 3 and for Grade 6 are available in elementary schools. The Grade 9 guide is available in junior high schools. The publications also may be obtained from Alberta Learning's Learner Assessment Branch.

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Special Needs

School boards are required to provide each resident student with an education program, including access to special education programs. If you think that your child may have special needs, talk to your child's teacher. *Partners During Changing Times* is an information booklet for parents of children with special needs. It provides a general overview of how you can be involved in the education of your children. This document is available on the Alberta Learning web site or by contacting the Special Programs Branch, Edmonton. An additional resource, *The Parent Advantage*, provides tips and strategies to assist parents in helping their children at home with their schoolwork. This resource is available for purchase from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre. As well, *A Handbook for Aboriginal Parents of Children with Special Needs* provides information to assist Aboriginal parents in working with schools to meet the special needs of their children. This resource is also available for purchase from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre.

English as a Second Language

Many children born in Canada have a first language other than English, and many students move here from non-English speaking countries. Schools provide additional assistance for English as a Second Language (ESL) students in grades 1 to 12. This helps them acquire sufficient fluency in English so they can integrate into the regular classroom as quickly as possible. If you think your child may have ESL needs, talk to your child's teacher.

Personal and Career Development

Preparing for life and work is a complex process that begins in the early years of schooling and continues throughout our lives. Alberta schools are taking an active role—along with parents and the community—in helping students move successfully from basic education to further studies and the workplace.

In junior high school, students begin linking their personal aptitudes and goals to possible future careers. They continue to develop life skills, including such employability skills as cooperating with others and being reliable. At this stage, students begin to outline their own learning and career goals.

Personal and career development activities and outcomes are integrated into all junior high school courses and programs. The following junior high programs focus specifically on these topics: Health and Personal Life Skills 7–9, Physical Education 7–9, Career and Technology Studies (CTS) and work study. Many junior high schools organize special career development activities, such as mentoring, job shadowing, portfolios and annual career fairs. Students may be asked to complete a learning/career plan to help them select courses related to their interests and possible career opportunities.

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Religious Education

Religious education is an essential and integral part of the life and culture of a Catholic school. Through it, students are invited to develop the knowledge, beliefs, skills, values and attitudes needed to build a relationship with God and community through the person of Jesus Christ. Religious education shares the same goals and objectives set forth for all good education, that is, the growth and development of the whole person in all his or her dimensions—physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual.

Religious education has four essential characteristics.

It is **Trinitarian**. It recognizes God as the creator of all things who gives us Jesus. It is Jesus who reveals God to us, and in turn reveals God's Spirit, through whom we understand our faith.

It is based on **Sacred Scripture** through which we hear the mystery of God revealed, the call to be in relationship with God and each other, and we learn how to pray.

It is based on the **life experience** of the students through which they are invited to discern signs of God in their daily lives.

It is presented within the tradition of the **Catholic faith community** which, based on Church teachings, sacramental and liturgical life, provides students with experiences of faith, prayer, love and justice.

With an awareness of the uniqueness of each student and a recognition that religious development takes place through a process of stages and within a community, it is expected that program presentation will vary from place to place to meet the diverse learning and religious formation needs of all students.

Religious Education Programs for elementary and junior high schools are authorized by the Bishop of the local diocese. Some school districts have developed supplementary resources and adapted the program to better meet local needs.

Building on the scriptural themes of Grade 7, the Grade 8 program focuses students' attention on the person of Jesus Christ, revealed as the fullness and perfect image of God. The students reflect on the last part of the Apostles' Creed which is studied as the summation of the faith that has been handed onto us through the Church. They study key aspects of the Sacraments and reflect on the Ten Commandments. They are invited to a meaningful life based on gospel values and morality, a call to hope and personal faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through a study of the various forms of prayer and sacramental celebrations, students are encouraged to make life-affirming choices as a response to Jesus' invitation to live a life of love and service.

Students explore these themes through the study of 8 units:

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Unit 1

We believe in the Holy Spirit.

Starting with the story of Pentecost the students deepen their understanding of the mystery of the Holy Trinity and the action of God in their lives. Through the gift of the Holy Spirit all are empowered to live the Gospel call to love and service.

Unit 2

We believe in the holy Church.

The students are invited to broaden their understanding of holiness and sacrament, and to deepen their awareness of God's presence in signs, symbols and ritual. They study the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation) as calling and empowering us to live in holiness and the Sacraments of Healing (Anointing of the Sick and Reconciliation) as signs of hope and wholeness in the midst of pain, confusion and brokenness.

Unit 3

We believe in one Catholic and Apostolic Church.

The students explore the unity and diversity of the Church. They reflect on the primary mission of the Church to share in the love of the Trinity and by examining different models of the Church come to better understand the richness of its diversity. As members of an apostolic Church the call to love and serve others is lived out and expressed in the Sacraments of Marriage and Holy Orders.

Unit 4

We believe in the communion of saints.

The students examine what it means to live as part of a community, identify those who are part of the community of saints, and reflect on the Christian attitude toward death. Through stories of saints the students are invited to reflect on God's love for them and their call to live the Gospel challenge even in the face of difficulty and hardship, realizing that ultimately each person is called to be a saint!

Unit 5

We believe in the forgiveness of sins.

The students are introduced to the Ten Commandments in terms of the challenges they pose for their lives today. Sin is seen as an abuse of the freedom that God gives us, weakening our love for God and one another and impairing our growth towards wholeness. Conscience is likened to a navigation chart that helps us to do the right thing as we go through life, with the grace of the Sacrament of Reconciliation making it possible for us to re-orient our lives toward God.

Unit 6

We believe in the resurrection of the body.

The students reflect on the human body as a precious gift from God and on their responsibility to care for their body since the way they treat their body affects their relationships with God and with others. In studying the Catholic teaching about responsible sexual conduct the students discuss appropriate and inappropriate expressions of love and affection. The sacrament of Marriage is presented as the context for total, lifelong and life-giving sexual love. Using Gospel stories which touch upon the issue of suffering, guidance is given to help students evaluate attitudes toward suffering and identify Christian ways of responding to pain.

Unit 7

We believe in life everlasting.

The students examine and appreciate the goodness of all creation and express a growing sense of responsibility for stewardship of the earth. By identifying some of the causes and results of violence within their own community students evaluate their attitudes toward violence and seek ways of being peacemakers and agents of justice for all especially for the weak and powerless. The question: "Do I live justly?" is explored by illustrating the relationship between poverty and excess consumption, and discovering how daily decisions about lifestyle affect the global community.

Unit 8

Amen.

The students review the Creed in its entirety examining it as both a statement of who we are and who we are called to become as followers of Jesus. Their "amen", their "yes", is both personal and communal and is made possible, reinforced, and lived out, in their participation in the Eucharist. While examining the flow of the Eucharistic liturgy the students discover the purpose and value of each part of the liturgy in relation to their faith and their lives.

As a result of participation in this program, students will:

- demonstrate a familiarity with and an ability to retell key biblical narratives that illustrate God's faithful relationship with a chosen people and the community's response to this relationship
- express connections between the relationships described in biblical events and their own life experiences
- show reverence for Scripture as God's living Word
- define human dignity and express its significance in Christian faith and practice
- name the articles of the Apostles' Creed as a summary expression of the Christian community's relationship with God and articulate some of the meaning of each article
- communicate their faith in ways that show a genuine understanding of the Apostles' Creed
- describe how the Creed is a summary of the faith community's understanding of who God is
- explain how the Creed calls them to make responsible choices and decisions in their everyday lives
- analyze (critique) events and personal decisions in light of a commitment to follow Jesus
- describe the relationship between real-life situations and the baptismal commitment to follow Jesus in the community of the Holy Spirit
- outline the ways that prayer deepens a relationship with God
- pray, using a variety of prayer styles
- participate in traditional forms of Catholic prayer.

The school, through the Religious Education Program, complements parents in their role as primary and principal educators of their children. Home and family play a vitally important role in the faith development of children. Within the family, seeds of faith are planted. Family

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relationships and daily experiences are major factors in shaping a child's values, attitudes and Catholic identity. Regular religious practice and the application of classroom learning to daily life are critical parts of religious formation.

Prayer is an integral part of the Religious Education Program and of each school day since intimacy with God is the ultimate goal of Catechesis. Respecting the individual differences of children and our changing human needs, prayer is experienced in many different ways: silent reflection, guided imagery, scriptural prayer, song and formal community prayer. As we enter into prayer, we give praise and thanks for God's loving presence and call upon the Spirit to guide, nourish and empower our lives through Jesus Christ.

Teaching the sacraments occurs within each of the Religious Education Programs. Sacraments celebrate the presence of Christ in our lives. They are effective signs that make God's grace present to us in love, healing and the transformation of our lives. Eucharist and Reconciliation are an essential part of each child's religious formation and a necessary grounding for a mature faith. As with many basic themes, Eucharist and Reconciliation are introduced in Grade 1, but continue to be deepened and intensified in each year thereafter. Children who have not yet celebrated First Communion or First Reconciliation are always welcome to contact their parish to begin their immediate preparation for the sacraments.

The Religious Education Program interprets for the students what the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches about our faith in a manner appropriate to the age and development of the students. Not everything in the Catechism is incorporated because, as the Catechism itself points out, what is taught must be adapted to the "differences of culture, age, spiritual maturity, and social and ecclesial conditions among all those to whom it is addressed" (#24). Specific excerpts are quoted at the end of each theme for the teacher to help root the contents and activities of the theme in Church tradition.

The Religious Education Program is structured around the church liturgical year. This enables students to live and express faith in an integrated way at school, at home and in the parish community.

English Language Arts

Language is the basis of all communication. Language learning is an active process that begins at birth and continues throughout life. Children learn language as they use it to communicate their thoughts, feelings and experiences; establish relationships with family members and friends; and strive to make sense and order of their world. Responsibility for language learning is shared by students, parents, teachers and the community.

The aim of English language arts is to enable each student to understand and appreciate language, and to use it confidently and competently in a variety of situations for communication, personal satisfaction and learning.

In a Catholic school, students are invited to consider how the knowledge, skills and values studied within the language arts curriculum are integrated with other subject areas, including religious education, and reflect the Catholic identity of the school.

By the end of Grade 8, students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to:

- ***explore thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences***

- revise understanding and expression of ideas by connecting new and prior knowledge and experiences
- seek out and consider diverse ideas, opinions and experiences to develop and extend own ideas, opinions and experiences
- pursue personal interest in specific genres by particular writers, artists, storytellers and filmmakers
- examine and reflect on own growth in effective use of language to revise and extend personal goals
- exchange ideas and opinions to clarify understanding and to broaden personal perspectives

- ***comprehend and respond personally and critically to oral, print and other media texts***

- use strategies to supplement and extend prior knowledge and experience when interpreting new ideas and information
- enhance understanding by paraphrasing main ideas and supporting details, and by rereading and discussing relevant passages
- identify and use visual and textual cues in reference materials, such as catalogues, databases, web sites, thesauri and writers' handbooks, to access information effectively and efficiently
- choose and use strategies for word identification, vocabulary development and spelling that build on specific strengths or address areas for improvement
- use a thesaurus to extend vocabulary and locate appropriate words that express particular aspects of meaning
- experience oral, print and other media texts from a variety of cultural traditions and genres
- explain connections between own interpretation and information in texts, and infer how texts will influence others

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- interpret the choices and motives of characters portrayed in oral, print and other media texts, and examine how they relate to self and others
- identify and discuss how word choice and order, figurative language, plot, setting and character work together to create mood and tone
- compare and contrast the different perspectives provided by first and third person narration
- summarize the content of media texts, and discuss the choices made in planning and producing them
- identify creative uses of language and visuals in popular culture, such as commercials, rock videos and magazines; explain how imagery and figurative language, such as hyperbole, create tone and mood
- create oral, print and other media texts related to issues encountered in texts and in own life
- create oral, print and other media texts with both main and minor characters

◆ ***manage ideas and information***

- experiment with several ways to focus a topic, and select a form appropriate to audience and purpose
- select the most appropriate information sources for topic, audience, purpose and form
- obtain information from a variety of sources, such as artifacts, debates, forums, biographies, autobiographies, surveys, documentaries, films, CDROMs, charts and tables, when conducting research
- organize ideas and information to establish an overall impression or point of view in oral, print and other media texts
- make notes in point form, summarizing major ideas and supporting details; reference sources
- evaluate the relevance and importance of gathered information; address information gaps
- communicate ideas and information in a variety of oral, print and other media texts, such as interviews, minilessons and documentaries
- assess the research process, and consider alternative ways of achieving research goals

◆ ***enhance the clarity and artistry of communication***

- evaluate how particular content features contribute to, or detract from, the overall effectiveness of own and others' oral, print and other media texts; make and suggest revisions
- revise to enhance sentence variety, word choice and appropriate tone
- vary handwriting style and pace, depending on the context, audience and purpose
- experiment with figurative language, voice, sentence patterns, camera angle and music to create an impression or mood
- use a variety of simple, compound and complex sentence structures to communicate effectively, and to make writing interesting
- use verb tenses consistently throughout a piece of writing

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- use knowledge of spelling generalizations and how words are formed to spell technical terms and unfamiliar words in own writing
- present information to achieve a particular purpose and to appeal to interest and background knowledge of reader or audience
- use appropriate verbal and nonverbal feedback to respond respectfully

◆ ***respect, support and collaborate with others***

- clarify and broaden perspectives and opinions, by examining the ideas of others
- participate in organizing and celebrating special events, recognizing the appropriateness and significance of the language arts
- use inclusive language and actions that demonstrate respect for people of different races, cultures, genders, ages and abilities
- propose ideas or advocate points of view that recognize the ideas of others and advance the thinking of the group
- organize and complete tasks cooperatively by defining roles and responsibilities, negotiating to find the basis for agreement, setting objectives and time frames, and reviewing progress
- evaluate the quality of own contributions to group process, and offer constructive feedback to others; propose suggestions for improvement.

Mathematics

Mathematics is a common human activity, increasing in importance in a rapidly advancing, technological society. A greater proficiency in using mathematics increases the opportunities available to individuals. Students need to become mathematically literate in order to explore problem-solving situations.

At all levels, students benefit from working with appropriate materials, tools and contexts when constructing personal meaning about new mathematical ideas.

The main goals of mathematics education are to prepare students to:

- use mathematics confidently to solve problems
- communicate and reason mathematically
- appreciate and value mathematics
- commit themselves to lifelong learning
- become mathematically literate adults, using mathematics to contribute to society.

As students acquire the specified outcomes, they will also be expected to use the following seven mathematical processes:

Communication
Connections
Estimation and Mental Mathematics
Problem Solving
Reasoning
Technology
Visualization.

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The mathematics content is organized into four strands:

Number
Patterns and Relations
Shape and Space
Statistics and Probability.

Number

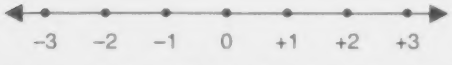
By the end of Grade 8, students will:

- Demonstrate a number sense for rational numbers, including common fractions, integers and whole numbers.

Sample Student Tasks

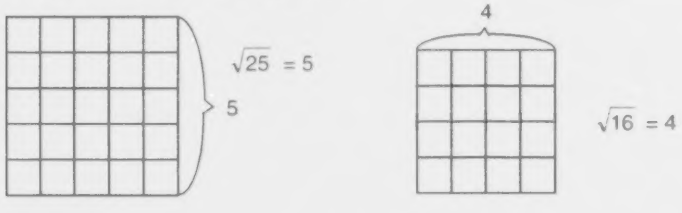
- The diameter of a human hair is 0.000 07 m. Write this number in scientific notation, using metres as the unit of measure. What is the diameter in centimetres?
- Explain where you would place each of the following numbers on the number line.

$+1.75, -1.2, -\frac{6}{5}, +\frac{2}{3}$



- A recipe calls for 250 mL of sugar, 500 mL of oatmeal and 750 mL of flour. Write the amounts of ingredients as a ratio. Write another equivalent ratio.

- Shamin used small square tiles to form larger squares as a way of finding the square roots of 25 and 16.



Use Shamin's method to show the square roots of 36, 49, 64 and 100.

- Apply arithmetic operations on rational numbers to solve problems.

Sample Student Tasks

- Lisa had $\frac{3}{4}$ of a large candy bar. She gave $\frac{1}{3}$ of what she had to Shannon. Explain how you know that Shannon got less than $\frac{1}{3}$ of a whole bar, by:

  multiplying $\frac{1}{3} \times \frac{3}{4}$, using a pencil and paper method

  explaining your method and your answer by folding a piece of paper that represents a whole candy bar.

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- Miko has $2\frac{1}{2}$ m of blue cloth. How many pieces $\frac{1}{4}$ m long can she cut from her piece? Estimate the answer and explain the solution by:
  dividing $2\frac{1}{2} \div \frac{1}{4}$, using a pencil and paper method
  using Cuisenaire rods to explain your method and your answer.

- Apply the concepts of rate, ratio, percentage and proportion to solve problems in meaningful contexts.

Sample Student Tasks

- Have you read, or heard of, the book by Jonathan Swift called *Gulliver's Travels*? Gulliver, a ship captain, suffers a shipwreck, and finds himself in the land of Lilliput. Here he finds that the heights of the people, plants and animals are in a 1:12 ratio to the heights of the people, plants and animals in his world. Use the measuring tape to measure yourself. Then complete this chart.

Body Part	Actual Length	Length in Lilliput
Length of middle finger		
Length of your foot		
Your choice		

  Each day the Emperor of Lilliput gave Gulliver the food and drink necessary to feed about 1 728 Lilliputians. How did the Emperor's mathematicians arrive at this number? Explain why this should be about the right amount.

- Which is the better buy: 1.2 L orange juice for $2.50 or 0.75 L orange juice for $1.40?

- Suits selling regularly for $185.00 were marked down by 25%. To further improve sales, the discount price was reduced by another 15%. What was the final selling price? What was the total per cent of discount on the original price?

- In Canada, there are 1 million curlers registered in 1200 clubs. In Scotland, there are 50 000 curlers in 52 clubs, and in Sweden there are 9000 curlers in 36 clubs. Write a ratio for each to compare the number of curlers to the number of clubs, and arrange these in order of size from least to greatest.

Patterns and Relations

By the end of Grade 8, students will:

- Use patterns, variables and expressions, together with their graphs, to solve problems.

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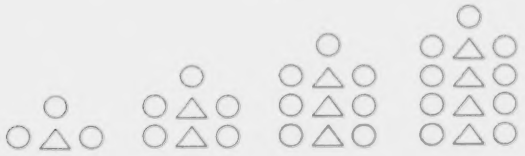
Sample Student Tasks

- Long-Foi made the following pictures with circles and triangles.



He started making a chart to show the number of circles and triangles in each picture.

Picture	Number of Circles	Number of Triangles
1	3	1
2	5	2
3		
4		

Complete Long-Foi's chart and look for a pattern.
Write a mathematics sentence to show the relationship between the number of circles and the number of triangles.
Make concrete models or pictures to verify your answers.
How many circles would you need in a picture with 12 triangles?
How can you find and verify the answer?
Substitute numbers in your sentence for each picture.

- Describe the following algebraic equation in words.

$$\frac{x}{2} + 5 = x + 2$$

◆ Solve and verify one-step and two-step linear equations with rational number solutions.

Sample Student Tasks

- Kassidy bought five CDs at the same price each and paid a total of $84.45. How much did each CD cost?
  Write an equation, and show how to solve it algebraically.
  Verify your answer by substituting it in your equation.

Shape and Space

By the end of Grade 8, students will:

◆ Apply indirect measurement procedures to solve problems.

Sample Student Tasks

- Jamie wants to walk from one corner of the rectangular playground to the opposite corner. The playground is 30 m by 50 m. What is the shortest route he can take? Explain.

◆ Generalize measurement patterns and procedures, and solve problems involving area, perimeter, surface area and volume.

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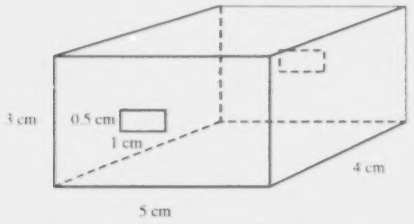
Sample Student Tasks

- You want to paint one wall of your room. The wall is 7.0 m long and 2.4 m high. It takes one small can of paint to cover 9 m^2 and the paint sells for $3.99 a can.
  What would it cost you, if you purchase only paint?
  What else do you need to think of?
  Make a plan for your trip to the store for supplies for this painting job.

- First estimate, and then find, the volume and the surface area of the figure below. The figure is a 3 cm × 4 cm × 5 cm solid block of wood with a 1 cm × 0.5 cm × 4 cm hole cut in it.



◆ Link angle measures and the properties of parallel lines to the classification and properties of quadrilaterals.

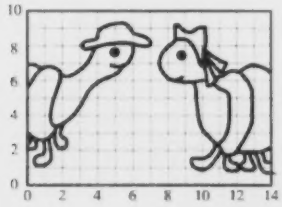
Sample Student Tasks

- Identify, compare and debate the merits of shape in present and past architectural construction methods and decoration features; e.g., golden rectangle.

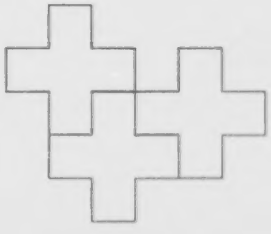
◆ Create and analyze design problems and architectural patterns, using the properties of scaling, proportion and networks.

Sample Student Tasks

- If the following figure is drawn on 1 cm grid paper, draw its enlargement on 2 cm grid paper.



- The four-colour map theorem says that any flat map, no matter how many separate regions it has, can be coloured using only four colours, so that no bordering regions are the same colour. Cover a page with a design like the one shown, and test the theorem. Also test the theorem with a real map, such as that of Canada, the United States or Europe.



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Statistics and Probability

By the end of Grade 8, students will:

- Develop and implement a plan for the collection, display and analysis of data, using technology, as required.

Sample Student Tasks

- Using published data, find the life expectancy for females of 20 different countries. Graph the results, using a box and whisker plot.

- Evaluate and use measures of central tendency and variability.

Sample Student Tasks

- The mean score on a test was 5. The median was also 5, but the mode was 6. The 13 scores ranged from 2 to 10.
  Construct a set of scores that have the above measures.
  Represent each score with centicubes or unifix to show the measures concretely.
  Another score of 15 is added to the data. How will this affect each of the above measures?

- Compare theoretical and experimental probability of independent events.

Sample Student Tasks

- What is the probability of having exactly two boys in a family of five children? Design a simulation, using coins to answer the question.

Parent Document

The booklet *Working Together in Mathematics Education* provides an overview of the new mathematics curriculum and shows some of the knowledge, skills and attitudes students are expected to learn. It presents some ways parents and others can support student learning in mathematics.

Working Together . . . is available for purchase from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre. This booklet is also available for viewing and downloading from the Alberta Learning web site.

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Science

In science, students develop knowledge and skills that help them understand and interpret the world around them. At each level of the junior high program, students learn basic concepts from earth, physical and life sciences, and are challenged to apply what they have learned. Through their studies, students are expected to develop skills of inquiry and experimentation, skills of solving practical problems, and skills of finding and evaluating information.

In a Catholic school, students are invited to consider how issues of stewardship, morals and ethics, and Catholic teaching can be integrated appropriately into the science curriculum.

The Grade 8 science program consists of six units of study. Each unit focuses on a particular topic and develops three common themes:

- Nature of Science
- Science and Technology
- Science, Technology and Society.

The six units of study are:

- Solutions and Substances
- Energy and Machines
- Consumer Product Testing
- The Earth's Crust
- Growing Plants
- Interactions and Environments.

Solutions and Substances

Students are introduced to the examination of substances and solutions.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- tell the difference between a variety of substances and solutions both in natural and man-made materials; for example, tell the difference between a salt solution and a container of pure water
- observe, measure and describe properties of matter, mixtures and solutions; for example, describe a material as clear, translucent or opaque
- recognize, compare and describe the solubility and rate of dissolving materials; for example, salt, alum and sugar
- describe and carry out specific techniques to separate solutions; for example, settling, filtration, evaporation, distillation and crystallization.

Energy and Machines

Students study mechanical systems, focusing on their efficiency and effectiveness.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- identify the parts of a simple mechanical device and a mechanical subsystem
- describe the operation and application of a simple mechanical system
- compare alternative designs of a mechanical device; for example, compare propulsion systems in toy cars

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- identify the source of power and linkages within a mechanical system
- identify mechanical design changes that improve efficiency and reduce friction.

Consumer Product Testing

Students study consumer product testing, focusing on the need for safe, reliable and effective products.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- identify product characteristics that might be considered in evaluating the quality and effectiveness of a product; for example, identify safety characteristics of a bicycle helmet
- describe how product testing provides valuable information to manufacturers and consumers
- explain the importance of safety and quality standards for consumer goods
- make sample consumer decisions considering many alternatives and their implications; for example, evaluate household cleaners based on information about their cleaning properties and about their effect on the environment.

The Earth's Crust

Students investigate features of the Earth's crust that can be interpreted by examining earth materials and formations.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- interpret evidence of major earth changes found through ongoing changes of surface features
- interpret a variety of characteristics in rocks and minerals to determine how and where they were formed
- interpret rock formations to provide explanations for earth changes.

Growing Plants

Students learn about the general features of plants, their structures and functions. This knowledge is applied to specific applications for enhanced plant growth and propagation.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- describe how plant breeding leads to the development of plants with specialized characteristics; for example, the development of tomato plants with a short growing season
- describe the different functions of plant structures
- compare plant growth and reproduction by manipulating growth conditions
- interpret the environmental consequences of controlling plant pests and diseases.

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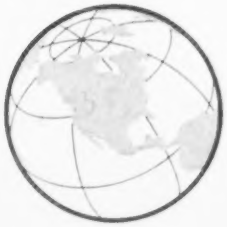
Interactions and Environments

Students study living things in relationship to the environment in which the living things exist.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- describe an environment with nonliving characteristics
- interpret the interdependence, food chain relationships and energy flows within an ecosystem
- predict how changes to the environment may have intended and/or unintended consequences.

Social Studies



Social studies helps students to learn basic knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to become responsible citizens and contributing members of society. Social studies includes the study of history, geography, economics, the behavioural sciences and humanities. Grade 8 social studies focuses on people and their society and how they interact with their environment. The content is organized around three topics that serve as the context for developing important skills and attitudes. In each topic, students are expected to address at least one issue and one question for inquiry. Suggestions for this inquiry are provided within the curriculum.

In a Catholic school, students are invited to consider how issues of social justice, the contribution of the Church to community (locally and globally), and Church teaching can be integrated appropriately into the social studies curriculum.

Three topics are identified for Grade 8.

Geography of Canada and the United States

Students develop an understanding of the relationship of geography to patterns of life in Canada and the United States. Students will study the geography of the two countries.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- identify and define the terms regions, location and movement
- understand that people are constantly interacting with their physical environment to meet their needs
- understand that the environment is constantly being changed by human and physical forces
- understand that all places have special human and physical characteristics
- construct maps demonstrating use of symbols, location, direction, distance, scale and physical geography
- categorize information to develop concepts
- appreciate interdependence as a common feature of life
- cooperate and work with others willingly.

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Canada: History to the Twentieth Century

Students develop a greater understanding of the historical development of Canada to the present century.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- understand that colonization was one result of competition between nations for new territory
- explain the process of Canada's growth and expansion
- construct a timeline of major events and contributions of individuals that shaped the political development of Canada
- read and interpret historical maps
- develop respect for democratic principles
- consider opinions and interpretations different from their own.

South America: A Case Study of Brazil

Students develop an understanding of the physical and human geography of Brazil over time.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- identify the major physical features of Brazil
- explain how immigration and settlement patterns have shaped the historical and cultural development of Brazil
- understand the effect human settlement has had on Brazil's physical environment
- understand how the culture of Brazil reflects the variety of origins of its people
- compare information drawn from two or more sources
- differentiate between main and related ideas
- develop respect and tolerance for the rights, needs, opinions and concerns of others
- appreciate the consequences of people's interactions with their environment.

Physical Education

The physical education program emphasizes active living, with a focus on physical activity that is valued and integrated into daily life.

The aim of the K–12 physical education program is to enable individuals to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to lead an active, and healthy lifestyle.

Four general outcomes form the basis of the K–12 curriculum. These are interrelated and interdependent. Each is to be achieved through participation in a variety of physical activities from the five dimensions outlined in general outcome A.

Each general outcome includes specific outcomes by grade, or by course name at the senior high school level. Specific outcomes for Grade 8 physical education follow.

Within Catholic schools, some of the values integrated into the Physical Education program include recognizing the dignity of each person as evident in their unique gifts and talents, community building, cooperation and shared responsibility, respect and care for the body.

By the end of Grade 8, students will:

General Outcome A

- acquire skills through a variety of developmentally appropriate movement activities; dance, games, types of gymnastics, individual activities and activities in an alternative environment; e.g., aquatics and outdoor pursuits.

Basic Skills

- select, combine and perform specific locomotor skills in a variety of activities to improve personal performance
- select, combine and perform locomotor skills by using elements of body and space awareness, effort and relationships, to improve personal performance
- select, combine and perform specific nonlocomotor skills in a variety of activities to improve personal performance
- select, combine and perform nonlocomotor skills by using elements of body and space awareness, effort and relationships, to improve personal performance
- demonstrate ways to receive, retain and send an object with varying speeds, accuracy and distance in skills specific to an activity
- select, combine and perform manipulative skills by using elements of space awareness, effort and relationships, with and without objects, to improve performance

Application of Basic Skills

- apply activity-specific skills in a variety of environments and using various equipment; e.g., cross-country skiing, skating
- select, refine and present a variety of dance sequences; e.g., jazz, square, social and novelty, alone and with others
- choreograph and perform dance sequences, using the elements of movement and basic dance steps and patterns
- select, combine and perform activity-specific basic skills in a variety of games
- be able to identify and evaluate specific strategies and tactics that coordinate effort with others; i.e., team/fair play, in order to achieve a common activity goal
- select and perform ways to improve the functional and expressive qualities of movements, that combine basic skills in a variety of gymnastic experiences individually, with a partner, or in a group; e.g., educational, rhythmic and artistic
- select, perform and refine activity-specific skills in a variety of individual pursuits; e.g. wrestling

By the end of Grade 8, students will:

General Outcome B

- understand, experience and appreciate the health benefits that result from physical activity.

Functional Fitness

- monitor and analyze a personal nutrition plan that affects physical performance
- demonstrate and monitor ways to achieve a personal functional level of physical fitness
- explain fitness components and principles of training, and formulate individual plans for personal physical fitness

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Body Image
- acknowledge the perceptions that occur as a result of media influence on body types in relation to physically active images
- discuss performance-enhancing substances and how they can effect body type in relation to physical activity

Well-being
- analyze the personal effects of exercise on the body systems before, during and after exercise
- monitor, analyze and assess fitness changes as a result of physical activity
- describe and perform appropriate physical activities for personal stress management and relaxation

By the end of Grade 8, students will:

General Outcome C

◆ interact positively with others.

Communication
- communicate thoughts and feelings in an appropriate respectful manner as they relate to participation in physical activity
- discuss positive active living role models

Fair Play
- demonstrate etiquette and fair play

Leadership
- describe, apply and practise leadership and followership skills related to physical activity

Teamwork
- recommend practices that contribute to teamwork
- identify and demonstrate positive behaviours that show respect for self and others

By the end of Grade 8, students will:

General Outcome D

◆ assume responsibility to lead an active way of life.

Effort
- participate regularly in, and identify and describe the benefits of, an active lifestyle
- develop a personal plan that encourages participation and continued motivation

Safety
- select and apply rules, routines and procedures for safety in a variety of activities
- design and perform warm-up and cool-down activities
- appraise or judge movement experiences for safety that promote an active, healthy lifestyle; e.g., safe use of equipment

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Goal Setting/Personal Challenge

- monitor, revise and refine personal goals based on interests and abilities
- evaluate different ways to achieve an activity goal, and determine personal and team approaches that are challenging for both the individual and the group

Active Living in the Community

- analyze community programs that promote a physically active lifestyle
- analyze factors that affect choices of physical activity for life, and create personal strategies to overcome barriers

Consideration for exemptions from participation in physical education is given for medical conditions, when accompanied by medical certification from a doctor to the principal; for religious beliefs, when accompanied by a statement in writing from a parent to the principal and where access to facilities is prohibitive. When exemption is granted, activities consistent with the outcomes of the specific dimension should be substituted where appropriate.

Health and Personal Life Skills

Each person begins life with unique characteristics, capabilities, limitations and the potential to grow as a person. A health program that encompasses the multidimensional nature of the person helps students recognize their potential and become aware of alternatives that will enhance their personal lifestyle.

The Health and Personal Life Skills program encourages the involvement of community agencies. To promote accurate information exchange and to encourage ongoing health education, it is important to involve parents and community resource people in the health program. Health education is a responsibility shared with the home, school and community.

The Health and Personal Life Skills curriculum is arranged around themes. While the themes are repeated throughout the junior high program, the focus and content are different in each grade.

In a Catholic school, these themes are taught within the context of the teachings of the Catholic Church. The local boards of many Catholic school districts have approved supplementary resources and adapted the curriculum to better meet the needs of their students, their families and their faith communities.

Self-awareness and Acceptance

Students are provided the opportunity to develop attitudes of self-awareness and acceptance.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- describe the terms self-concept, culture and stereotyping
- develop appropriate methods to manage feelings and behaviour
- understand how behaviours affect others.

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Relating to Others

Students learn that interpersonal relationship skills help individuals make decisions about behaviour that allow them to feel good about themselves and function positively within their environment.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- explain the positive and negative effects of belonging to a group
- describe the functions of family and interpret their role in the family.

Life Careers

Students consider their personal interests, aptitudes and abilities in relation to career awareness and personal career planning.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- describe the relationship between occupation and lifestyle choices
- explain the importance of lifelong career planning
- analyze personal characteristics with respect to possible career options.

Body Knowledge and Care

Students acquire the knowledge and skills to help them make effective decisions and to care for their body.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- describe the importance of nutrition to a healthy body
- discuss methods of preventing and controlling accidents in various situations
- demonstrate an understanding of risk assessment and decision making in making healthful lifestyle choices
- identify and describe the health services available in the community.

Human Sexuality

This theme emphasizes the individual nature of change, growth and the importance of one's family and personal values with respect to sexuality and sexual decision making. This unit is addressed within the context of Catholic teaching.

By the end of Grade 8, students are expected to:

- describe the physical and emotional changes associated with puberty
- understand the process of reproduction and birth
- discuss the purpose and function of contraception.

The lesson on contraception informs the student how each method works and the moral position of the Catholic Church on that method.

Alberta Learning requires that all schools offer the Human Sexuality theme of the Health and Personal Life Skills program. Parents will be notified when this theme will be offered. Parents decide if their child will participate in the human sexuality component.

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Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

The ICT curriculum provides a broad perspective on the nature of technology, how to use and apply a variety of technologies, and the impact of ICT on self and society. Students in Kindergarten through Grade 12 will be encouraged to grapple with the complexities, as well as the advantages and disadvantages, of technologies in our lives and workplaces.

Technology is about the way things are done; the processes, tools and techniques that alter human activity. ICT is about the new ways in which we can communicate, inquire, make decisions, manage information and solve problems.

The ICT curriculum is not intended to stand alone as a course, but rather to become a part of core courses and programs.

The ICT curriculum will be implemented in all schools in Alberta over a three-year period, starting September 2000 through to June 2003.

General and Specific Outcomes

General outcomes for the ICT curriculum are statements that identify what students are expected to know and be able to do and value by the end of grades 1–3, 4–6, 7–9 and 10–12. There is a progressive sequence of skill development throughout the grades. Specific outcomes expand on the general outcomes and state in more detail what students are expected to learn. ICT outcomes are organized into three main categories, as shown in the charts below. For each category, all the general outcomes themselves also are listed.

Communicating, Inquiring, Decision Making and Problem Solving	
C1	Students will access, use and communicate information from a variety of technologies.
C2	Students will seek alternative viewpoints, using information technologies.
C3	Students will critically assess information accessed through the use of a variety of technologies.
C4	Students will use organizational processes and tools to manage inquiry.
C5	Students will use technology to aid collaboration during inquiry.
C6	Students will use technology to investigate and/or solve problems.
C7	Students will use electronic research techniques to construct personal knowledge and meaning.

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Foundational Operations, Knowledge and Concepts	Processes for Productivity
F1 Students will demonstrate an understanding of the nature of technology.	P1 Students will compose, revise and edit text.
F2 Students will understand the role of technology as it applies to self, work and society.	P2 Students will organize and manipulate data.
F3 Students will demonstrate a moral and ethical approach to the use of technology.	P3 Students will communicate through multimedia.
F4 Students will become discerning consumers of mass media and electronic information.	P4 Students will integrate various applications.
F5 Students will practise the concepts of ergonomics and safety when using technology.	P5 Students will navigate and create hyperlinked resources.
F6 Students will demonstrate a basic understanding of the operating skills required in a variety of technologies.	P6 Students will use communication technology to interact with others.

Examples of Specific Outcomes

By the end of Grade 9, students are expected to:

- communicate in a pervasive and engaging manner, through appropriate forms, such as speeches, letters, reports and multimedia presentations, applying information technologies for content, audience and purpose
- evaluate the authority and reliability of electronic sources
- pose and test solutions to problems by using computer applications, such as computer-assisted design or simulation/modelling software.

The ICT curriculum, along with support documents, can be found on the Alberta Learning web site.

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Optional Courses

In addition to required courses, junior high schools are required to offer two provincially authorized optional courses. Optional courses are offered in the areas of career and technology studies, environmental and outdoor education, fine and performing arts, religious or ethical studies, and languages other than English. The range of optional courses offered varies from school to school dependent on such factors as student and parent preferences, facilities and staffing. Optional courses are designed to reinforce the learning in required courses, and to provide opportunities for students to explore areas of interest and areas related to potential careers.

Career and Technology Studies

Career and Technology Studies (CTS) provides students with practical, hands-on learning experiences in the area of personal interest, general career exploration and applied technology. In CTS, students have the opportunity to use and apply technology effectively and efficiently to solve problems and produce usable products within a personally relevant career context.

The Career and Technology Studies program is organized into strands and courses. Schools select from 22 strands those courses that are most relevant for the students and the community. A strand is a group of courses that support a wide range of career and occupational opportunities within one particular category. A course defines what students should know and be able to do and, in general, takes about 25 hours to complete, although some students may need less or more time. Students progress through a sequence of courses completing more challenging projects and activities as they go. In senior high school, students can build on what they learned in junior high school, developing career-specific skills that will help them make a smooth transition into adult roles in the family, community, workplace or further education.

The 22 Career and Technology Studies program strands are:

- Agriculture
- Career Transitions
- Communication Technology
- Community Health
- Construction Technologies
- Cosmetology Studies
- Design Studies
- Electro-Technologies
- Energy and Mines
- Enterprise and Innovation
- Fabrication Studies
- Fashion Studies
- Financial Management
- Foods
- Forestry
- Information Processing
- Legal Studies
- Logistics
- Management and Marketing
- Mechanics
- Tourism Studies
- Wildlife

The CTS program offered in each school will vary depending on student and parent wishes, staff and facilities. Parents are encouraged to visit their local school to determine which CTS courses are being offered.

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Students in Career and Technology Studies are expected to:

- develop skills that they can apply in their daily lives now and in the future
- refine career planning skills
- develop technology-related skills
- enhance employability skills
- apply and reinforce learnings developed in other subject areas.

Fine and Performing Arts

In a Catholic school, students are invited to consider how the knowledge, skills and values studied within the fine arts curriculum can be used to understand the religious dimensions of art, liturgy, music and history. They are also used directly to enhance the religious and spiritual culture of the school, and to celebrate the various liturgical feasts of the year.

Art

In art, students are expected to learn how to express their personal feelings and intuitions and to become art critics. To achieve this, students are expected to use traditional and contemporary tools, materials and media, to think like artists, to value the art creation, and to value the art form. The expectations for art are the same for students in grades 7, 8 and 9. Students are expected to demonstrate increased levels of performance during the three years in junior high school.

Three areas—drawings, compositions and encounters—provide the framework for the junior high art program.

By using a variety of materials and techniques, students are expected to:

- depict the visual world through drawing, painting and sculpting
- increase technical competencies in drawing, painting and sculpting
- develop competencies in composition and use of multiple media
- develop a vocabulary for critiquing their art work in a positive way
- use the proper vocabulary of art criticism
- investigate natural forms and man-made structures as source subjects
- compare natural and man-made artifacts
- understand the impact of artistic expression on cultures and across cultures.

Drama

Drama encourages students to explore a variety of dramatic roles and develop a range of dramatic skills. Students set up a dramatic situation, act out the situation and reflect on the consequences. It is this reflection that provides the knowledge for self-development and improved performance. Through the five disciplines in the junior high drama program, students learn about the different forms and standards of drama and theatre.

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The five disciplines are:

movement	–	physical, nonverbal expression
speech	–	exploration of talking and speaking to effectively communicate ideas
improvisation/acting	–	acting out of an idea or situation
theatre studies	–	an introduction to the elements of drama and theatre
technical theatre	–	stage construction and the use of sound, lighting, makeup, costumes, sets and props.

Music

Instrumental music, choral music and general music are the three distinctive, yet related, programs in the junior high music curriculum. Development in any of these programs requires student involvement as performer, listener and composer.

The **instrumental** music program is designed to be a sequential and developmental approach to music instruction in either a wind percussion program or strings program.

The **choral** music program provides opportunities for students to develop and increase musical competency through singing, listening, creating and reading music.

The **general** music program covers a wide variety of musical areas from composition to performance, history and the basics of music.

The five main goals of junior high music are to enable students to:

- develop skills in listening, performing and reading music
- strive for musical excellence
- understand, evaluate and appreciate a variety of music styles
- develop self-expression, creativity and communication through music
- increase their awareness of the history of music and the role of music in their lives.

Language Programs and Courses Other Than English

French Immersion

In addition to studying the English language arts, students registered in an immersion or a bilingual program follow a language arts course in the target language; e.g., French, Ukrainian. In these programs, this target language is also used as the language of instruction in other subject areas, such as mathematics, science, social studies.

In Alberta, many students have the opportunity to study in a French immersion program. This program, designed for non-French speaking students, offers students an effective way to become functionally fluent in French while achieving all of the objectives of the regular program of studies. Graduates from French immersion programs achieve a level of fluency in the target language that allows them to pursue their post-secondary studies in French or to accept employment in a workplace where French is the main language of communication.

Although there are many delivery models present in Alberta schools, the most common model offered is referred to as early immersion. In this delivery model, students begin their immersion experience in

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Kindergarten and continue on in the program to Grade 12. There are also French immersion programs with other entry points; the most popular of these being late immersion, where the entry point is typically in Grade 7. As can be expected, the French language proficiency achieved by students is in large part determined by the exposure to the target language. Regardless of the model (early or late French immersion), students in these programs generally achieve excellent results on Alberta's achievement and diploma testing programs, including English Language Arts. Learning the French language is an integral part of the immersion experience and must take place in all subject areas taught in French.

Any course, for example, mathematics, science, social studies, offered in the French language has as its basis a French version of the English program of studies. It is identical or comparable, except for Grade 1 to Grade 3 social studies, to the one used in the English program. However, a program of studies specific to French immersion students was developed for the learning/teaching of French Language Arts. Some of the main French Language Arts learning outcomes are presented below.

French Language Arts

At the junior high school level, the French Language Arts program of studies is intended to continue the work started at the elementary level, including vocabulary and syntax enrichment, to enable students to engage more actively and effectively in proposed activities. Students become increasingly aware of elements that ensure message clarity, such as exact, precise expressions and words, and correct, increasingly complex sentences. They learn to respect the basic rules of language in the oral exchanges that take place in the classroom as well as in their writing projects. By acquiring a select store of language, students equip themselves to better understand, clarify and express increasingly abstract thoughts. The program of studies also targets the development of the students' ability to plan and monitor their communication projects, whether they are working individually, with classroom partners, or participating in activities organized by the francophone community. Students become more aware of factors that influence the way they communicate effectively in various contexts.

In **oral comprehension**, students learn to pay particular attention to the organization of a message (text structure and genre) and to their knowledge about the author, producer or broadcast to guide them in their listening. They learn to question their attitudes toward the task and the means they use to overcome difficulties.

In **reading comprehension**, students develop their reading ability by analyzing the task at hand and choosing the best way to tackle more complex passages. They improve their ability to analyze text characteristics for a better understanding of the internal organization (text structure and genre) and the author's intent.

In **oral production**, students learn the vocabulary and syntax that will enable them to express themselves in various contexts. They develop the ability to plan group projects and to interact effectively with their peers.

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In **writing**, students gradually learn to draw up a work plan that will enable them to complete their writing projects more efficiently. They learn to organize and formulate their ideas clearly, while still respecting the rules of internal text organization as well as those of grammatical spelling. They also learn to edit their texts using various reference works.

Note: The development of language basics does not take place in isolated exercises, but rather in context, so that students learn not only the rules but also when and how to apply them.

In Grade 8, learning occurs primarily through:

- group work situations
- the reading to students of texts from various subject areas
- the reading to students of newspaper and magazine articles, short stories or chapters from novels
- listening to audio texts, such as documentaries
- viewing audiovisual materials.

Students will learn to examine the factors influencing the listening situation and become aware of their attitudes toward the task.

Teachers will select, for their students:

- descriptive texts
- texts from the field of information and opinion
- texts from the imaginary world; e.g., cartoons, poetry and song.

As for development of reading strategies, students learn to tackle texts taking into account their organization (descriptive type) and developing various ways of annotating texts.

The proposed situations should allow students to demonstrate what they already know, what they have learned about a given subject, or to express their opinions based on examples from their readings, interactions with others, and so on. The topics chosen for the presentations may be from other subject areas, such as social studies and science. Students should have had the opportunity to explore topic-related vocabulary in various contexts.

The presentations and interactive situations should be well-structured, with emphasis on:

- use of expressions or words to describe events and their experiences
- respect for the following sequence: *subject noun (or subject pronoun) + complement pronoun + verb*
- common use of the present subjunctive.

Students learn to write short texts in which they pay particular attention to the structure and organization of information. They also learn to write short stories in which they establish links between the feelings of the characters and their actions.

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The main purpose of these activities is to enable students to integrate basic elements of the written language:

- selection of a text structure consistent with their communicative intent
- organization of ideas according to a plan—introduction, development and conclusion
- recognition and correction of syntactic anglicisms
- common use of the present subjunctive
- verb agreement when the subject is followed by a "screen" (words in apposition) or when the subject is *qui*
- agreement of subject and verb in the present conditional and simple future
- place of the direct or indirect personal pronouns in declarative and interrogatory statements using simple tenses
- punctuation
- spelling.

Should this program be of interest to you, contact your school jurisdiction to explore local program offerings. A wealth of information is also available in the publication entitled *Yes, You Can Help! A Guide for French Immersion Parents* available for purchase from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre. Additional information is also available from the French Language Services Branch and from Canadian Parents for French (CPF) at 403–262–5187, Calgary.

French as a Second Language

In Alberta, French as a Second Language (FSL) is a program in which the French language is taught as a subject, often between 20 and 40 minutes a day, to help students develop communication skills, language knowledge and cultural awareness in French.

Depending upon a school board's language policy, French as a Second Language in junior high schools may be offered as an optional program or it may be a compulsory program. School boards may begin the program at different grade levels, since the program is based on developing language proficiency over a grade or grades without being grade specific. Many schools start the elementary program in Grade 4, but others may not begin until Grade 7 or later.

The program is designed to teach students how to understand what they hear and read in French, and to communicate their ideas orally and in written form, using an approach that is based on real-life experiences and situations. Students will also acquire knowledge about local, provincial and national francophone groups to become more aware of their presence and to better understand them. Students learn the French language vocabulary and grammar through thematic activities and projects that are related to real-life language experiences. At the same time, students are taught specific language learning strategies that will help them become better second language learners.

The program is organized into three language proficiency levels—Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced. Each of these proficiency levels is then further divided into three sublevels. In junior high schools, students start at the Beginning Level and progress through the

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Beginning 1, Beginning 2 and Beginning 3 sublevels. It could take students one or more school years to reach a particular language proficiency level, depending upon when the students start the program and how much time is given to French instruction in the school.

Students entering junior high school may either begin their French language experience or they can continue developing their language proficiency, depending upon the level that was attained in elementary school.

For those starting French in junior high, the language content is based upon the concrete experiences of junior high students. These experiences provide a real-life context for understanding ideas in French and for communicating similar ideas. Each level has its own set of experiences that fall into the following areas:

Beginning 1

- School
- People Around Us
- Weather
- Animals
- Holidays and Celebrations

Beginning 2

- Community
- Clothing
- Exercise
- Food
- Housing

Beginning 3

- Activities
- Vacations
- Fine Arts
- Trades and Professions
- Hygiene and Safety

As students work through these experiences, they develop their ability to understand and communicate in French. At the end of each level, the students must demonstrate the following knowledge and skills:

Beginning 1

The ability to understand simple ideas contained in listening texts, such as the temperature in a weather forecast.

The ability to talk about concrete ideas, using simple sentences to identify, list or describe people, places or things, and to ask simple questions. For example, students could talk about their family by naming the members of the family, giving their ages and birthdays.

Beginning 2

The ability to understand simple ideas contained in listening texts, such as understanding directions to the corner store, and to understand simple reading texts, such as understanding the main food items on a menu.

The ability to talk and write about concrete ideas, using simple sentences to identify, list or describe people, places or things, and to ask simple questions. For example, students could provide their address, telephone number and order pizza over the telephone. They could also write a simple note to describe their house to a pen pal.

Beginning 3

The ability to understand simple ideas contained in listening texts, such as a recorded message of flight departure times, and to understand simple reading texts, such as the safety rules on a safety week poster.

The ability to talk and write about concrete ideas, using a number of simple sentences to identify, list or describe people, places or things, ask simple questions, give information and simple advice. For example, students could telephone a travel agency to ask for prices for different travel destinations. They could also write a simple announcement for the school's Night of Music concert to promote it in the community.

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Once students have attained a Beginning Level 3 language proficiency, they then move into the next proficiency level, which is Intermediate Level 4.

At the Intermediate level, the following set of language experiences are developed:

Intermediate 4	Intermediate 5	Intermediate 6
– Health and Exercise – Holidays and Celebrations – Clubs and Associations – Shopping – Senses and Feelings	– Close Friends – Fashion – Social Life – Outdoor Activities – Advertising	– World of Work – Trips, Excursions or Student Exchanges – Money – Role of the Media – Conservation and the Environment

At each of these levels, the students work through these experiences to continue developing their ability to understand and communicate in French.

At the end of each level, the students must demonstrate the following knowledge and skills:

Intermediate 4	Intermediate 5	Intermediate 6
The ability to understand main ideas and some details contained in listening and reading texts that are familiar and somewhat predictable, such as understanding some key ideas given in a radio program concerning someone's feelings, or understanding the main ideas and some details contained in travel brochures in order to decide which place would be the most appropriate for a school trip. The ability to talk and write about concrete topics, using simple and complex sentences, to compare or describe people, places or things, or to give or ask for information or advice. For example, students could talk about their club on a radio talk show and invite people to join, or they could write about what they are feeling in a journal entry.	The ability to understand main ideas and most details contained in listening and reading texts that are familiar and somewhat predictable, such as understanding almost all of the key ideas and most details presented in a fashion show, or understanding all the main ideas and most of the details contained in an article discussing simple survival techniques. The ability to talk and write about concrete topics, using simple and complex sentences, to compare or describe people, places or things, to give or ask for information or advice, or to narrate events in the past. For example, students could talk about their friends and what friendship means to them, or they could write a letter to a francophone pen pal.	The ability to understand all main ideas and almost all of the details contained in listening and reading texts that are somewhat familiar but less predictable, such as understanding almost all of the key ideas and most details presented in a televised interview on how to be successful in a job interview, or understanding all the main ideas and most of the details contained in an article discussing an environmental project. The ability to talk and write about mostly concrete but sometimes abstract topics, using a series of simple and complex sentences, to compare or describe people, places or things, to give or ask for information or advice, or to narrate events in any tense. For example, students could simulate carrying out a job interview or they could write a formal letter to a company on its environmental practices.

Once students have attained the Intermediate 6 language proficiency level, they then move into the Advanced Level 7 in senior high school.

Parent Document

The booklet *French as a Second Language (FSL) Program: A Guide for Parents* provides an overview of the Alberta FSL program. You may find this booklet particularly useful if you are considering FSL for a young child, helping an older child choose courses, or looking for ways to support your child in the FSL program. The booklet is available for purchase from the Learning Resources Distributing Centre and is also available for viewing and downloading from the Alberta Learning web site.

German as a Second Language

This is a two-year, German second language program for junior high school students and is designed to develop effective communication skills in German, as well as develop cultural awareness. It can be taken in Grade 7 and Grade 8, or in Grade 8 and Grade 9.

Upon completion of the program, students are expected to:

- demonstrate their understanding of familiar questions, statements and instructions
- speak with reasonably correct intonation, rhythm and pronunciation
- reply with an appropriate answer to commonly asked questions and simple questions
- participate in a simple conversation directed by the teacher
- read for specific information and ideas within the range of their personal learning experiences and interests
- write familiar German, by:
  - copying
  - writing phrases from memory and dictation
  - composing simple statements and questions
  - answering questions in a controlled or guided context
- demonstrate awareness of the cultural implications of certain common linguistic forms.

Native Languages

Blackfoot and Cree language and culture programs are designed to enable students to learn Native languages and to increase awareness of Native cultures.

Students are expected to:

- learn basic communication skills in Blackfoot or Cree
- develop cultural sensitivity and enhance personal development
- develop originality and creativity
- develop a desire to improve their competency in Blackfoot or Cree.

Ukrainian Language Arts

Ukrainian Language Arts is offered as part of the Ukrainian bilingual program and is designed for native speakers of Ukrainian and for students who speak other languages and wish to learn Ukrainian. The bilingual program begins in Kindergarten and goes through to Grade 12.

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Students are expected to:

- obtain specific information from teacher-selected sources
- recognize how to express personal feelings, ideas and opinions
- organize and present, effectively, information of interest to their peers
- share feelings; share and support ideas and opinions
- respond personally to a variety of literary forms
- use literature and other art forms to reflect creatively upon experiences of general interest
- recognize and be sensitive to differences or similarities in cultures
- recognize the contribution of the lifestyle of Ukrainians to the wider community.

Ukrainian as a Second Language, Six-year Program

The Ukrainian as a Second Language, six-year program, is designed for students who wish to learn to communicate with others in Ukrainian and to preserve Ukrainian language and culture. The program begins in Grade 7 and goes through to Grade 12.

Students are expected to:

- use appropriate social conventions
- ask and tell who someone is, someone's name, what something is
- carry out commands
- express actions in the negative
- ask and tell where people and objects are located, where one lives, simple directions
- ask and tell what one wants to do or needs to do
- count from 1 to 100 and recognize, orally, the ordinal numbers 1 to 10
- ask and tell the parts of the day, days of the week, seasons of the year.

In a Catholic school, both within the Religious Education Program and along with the study of the Ukrainian language, many aspects of the life and faith of the Ukrainian Catholic Church are studied and celebrated.

Other Languages

Locally developed language courses are available for Arabic, German, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Polish and Spanish. Contact your school board office for information about which language programs it offers.

Other

Environmental and Outdoor Education

In environmental and outdoor education, students develop interest and competence in outdoor studies and develop an understanding of their relationship to the environment. The course can be offered as a single course or as a sequence of courses.

Following completion of the course(s), students are expected to demonstrate:

- the basic knowledge, skills and attitudes required for safe and comfortable experiences

- understanding, respect and appreciation for themselves and others
- awareness and appreciation of living things
- understanding of basic ecological processes
- skill, judgement, confidence and sensitivity in a range of environmentally responsible activities in outdoor settings
- the ability to investigate the effects of human lifestyles on environment
- lifestyle strategies that encourage responsibility for local and global environments.

Ethics

The ethics course is designed to help students become contributing, ethical and mature persons. The aim of the course is to help students become more thoughtful, to think of the interests of others, and to see ethical implications in their daily lives.

Students are expected to learn:

- working definitions of ethics and values
- decision-making skills
- about historical values and traditions
- about values of different cultural groups
- about their responsibility to their community.

Modules include:

- Winning and Losing
- Fairness and the Law
- Religion and Values
- Messages in Media.

Locally Developed Courses

School boards may develop courses to be innovative and responsive to local and individual needs. Contact the school to learn about locally developed courses available in your jurisdiction.

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Feedback

Curriculum Handbook for Parents 2000–2001: Catholic School Version

Grade 8

We would like to know what you think about this handbook. Are you a:

_____ Parent

_____ Teacher (please indicate level) ___ Division 1, ___ Division 2, ____ Division 3

_____ School Administrator (please indicate level) ___ Division 1, ___ Division 2, ____ Division 3

_____ District Administrator

_____ Other (please specify) _____

1. I found this document:
   - _____ extremely useful
   - _____ useful
   - _____ somewhat useful
   - _____ not very useful.

2. What could be done to make this document more useful?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. Other comments and suggestions:

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

Thank you for your feedback.

Please send your response to:

Director, Curriculum Branch
Alberta Learning
11160 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
T5K 0L2
Fax: 780–422–3745